



CHANGING ROLE OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

"The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires" **William Arthur Ward.**

The education system has seen drastic changes over the past decades. Integrated teaching, problem-based learning, community- based learning, core-curricula with electives or options and more systematic curriculum planning has been advocated. The educational environment isn't confined to the classroom, instead extends into the home and community and around the world. Information isn't confined to the text-books only but it is available everywhere in bits and bytes. Students aren't consumers of facts and figures. They are the active creators of knowledge and most important teaching is regarding as most challenging and multifaceted profession which significantly contributes to the social, cultural and economic health of a nation.

Today the seeds of such a dramatic transformation has been sowed, prompted by massive revolution in knowledge, information technology and public demand for better learning, schools nationwide are slowly but surely restructuring themselves. The increasing emphasis on student autonomy has moved the centre of gravity away from the teacher and closer to the student. This increased attention towards learners hasn't undergone the importance of teachers as teaching and learning are closely related and the purpose of the teaching is to enhance learning. Many teachers today, however acknowledge both the art and science of learning. They understand that the essence of education is a close relationship between a knowledgeable, caring adult [teacher] and a secure, motivated child [student]. They grasp that their most important role is to get to know each student as an individual in order to comprehend his or her unique needs, learning style, social and cultural background, interests and abilities.

Due to this change of scenario, thousands of teachers are rethinking every part of their jobs, their relationship with students, the tools and techniques they employ, their rights and responsibilities, the form and content of curriculum, what standards to set and how to assess , their preparation as teachers and their ongoing professional development.

In short, teachers are reinventing themselves and their occupation to better serve school and students. Thus, one can say that **Teacher has – One Career, Many Roles.**

KEYWORDS: Teacher, Role OF Teacher, Multifaceted Profession, Learning.

"What makes you a teacher? Children speaks their minds"

- **Rose**, 9 years old from New Zealand – A teacher is a one who is kind, trusting and friendly to me.....one who must listen and understandnever lose the temper.
- **Nawal**, 12 years old from Morocco – A teacher is someone who transmits to the future generation what is the most precious to her, her culture and her education.
- **Analia**, 12 years old from Mexico- A teacher guides us through the light way to achieve our goal.

The above statement showed the role a teacher plays in his/her multi faceted profession is of a friend, a role model which helps the students to grow and develop. But as the time is changing in the dynamic society like ours, the role of a teacher has undergone lots of transformation just as the needs of our students have changed and revolved. As a part of teacher community, we complain and argue saying." Hamare time pe aisa nahi tha." or "yeh generation lucky hai." "yeh bache teacher ko mante nahin." My question to all my fellow beings is."Do you really think that we can buy respect." I feel that as a teacher a student needs to respect a teacher from within, respect will come just by students wishing us, getting up in a class once you enter, and calling us madam. It is necessary that she earns it. A teacher will definitely achieve it if she / he meets the demands of the students. To meet these demands, the teacher should herself be a learner and ready to transform herself to accept the new roles.

In the phase of acceptance of the changing role of the teacher has caused unease among those entrenched in traditional approaches to education. In the older days, teacher was considered as a provider and transmitter of information. A teacher was considered as an authoritarian over her subject matter and the student regarded teacher as a role model. The young today are facing a world in which communication and information revolution has led to changes in all spheres: scientific, technological, political, economic, social and cultural. To be able to prepare our young people face the future with confidence, purpose and responsibility, the crucial role of the teachers cannot be over emphasized.

New demands are often placed on the schools in addition to the existing ones, to be equipped with current knowledge and modern methods of acquiring new knowledge .It is teacher's responsibility to see that the students are prepared and are equipped to complete in the current scenario. Time has come when a teacher

needs to realize that," knowledge is like an ocean- never ending and deep" in which a teacher is to acts as a facilitator in a democratic environment having practical and multidisciplinary approach to achieve overall development.

The Roles of a Teacher

A key question is: what is the role of the teacher in the context of the developments taking place in the education system. There has been little sustained analysis of the role of the teacher (Squires, 1999). In general, we have been pre occupied with the details of curriculum planning, with the content of the teaching program and with the range of education strategies adopted. We have failed to take a broader view of the role of the teacher. What are teachers for in our institutions? For what would they be most missed if they were not there? It is likely that, faced with these questions, members of staff would give a range of answers. Uncertainly and significantly with the ranges of roles expected of a teacher is illustrated in the following extracts of letters from teachers regarding their own roles and responsibilities.

"I am concerned about the amount of time I am expected to serve on the curriculum committee and on the system-based working groups, planning the course and its delivery. In my previous post I was simply left to get on and deliver the teaching program in my subject, which is what I am employed to do."

"I welcome the time I have been given off my routine teaching duties to prepare a series of computer based training programs in my subject. This will allow us to replace about half of the lectures currently scheduled with opportunities for the students to engage in independent learning and critical thinking. We will be able also to make better use of the remaining lectures scheduled."

Unless we agree what roles of a teacher we need for our institution, we cannot seriously attempt to appoint appropriate teachers to the post, we cannot arrange usual staff development activities and we cannot define 'good teaching' and reward it by promotion or other recognition. This guide presents a model or framework in which the teacher's expanded role in education today is described.

Identification of the roles of the teachers

The six areas of activity of the teachers can be summarized as:-

1. The teacher as information provider
2. The teacher as role model

3. The teacher as facilitator
4. The teacher as assessor
5. The teacher as planner
6. The teacher as resource developer

Each of the six roles described can be subdivided into two roles, making a total of twelve roles as illustrated in figure1. Roles to the right in the figure require more content expertise or knowledge, and roles to the left more educational expertise.

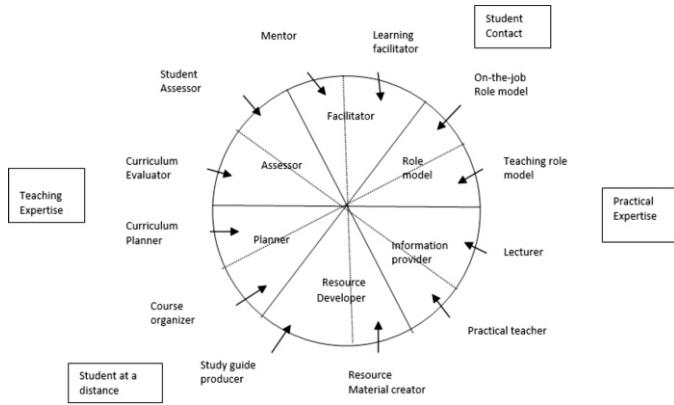


Figure 1
The twelve roles of the teachers

Roles to the top are associated with face- to- face contact with students, and the roles to the bottom are associated with less student contact. Figure2 shows how the 12 roles of the teacher can be viewed in the context of the relationship that exist between the student, the teacher and the curriculum.

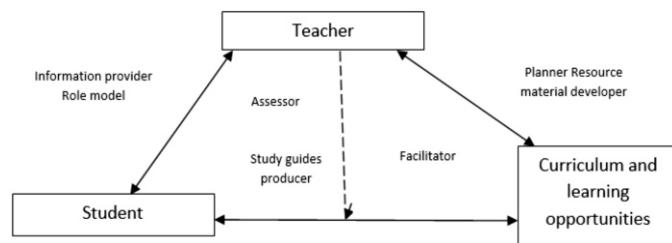


Figure 2
The role of the teacher in the context of the teacher, student/ curriculum framework.

THE TWELVE ROLES

In this section we explore each of the twelve roles identified in more detail.

** The Information Provider

a) The lecturer

This is one of the traditional role of the teacher in which it is the responsibility of the teacher to pass on to them the information, knowledge and understanding in a topic appropriate at the stage of their studies. The teacher is seen as an expert who is knowledgeable in his or her field, and conveys that knowledge to students usually by word of mouth.

Despite the availability of other sources of information, the lecture remains as one of the most widely used instructional methods. It can be a cost effective method of providing new information not found in standard texts. In addition to it the teachers used interactive ways, including the lecture, to pass this knowledge on to the students.

There has been, however, a general call for a reduction in the number of lectures scheduled in the curriculum. The exclusion of the lecture from the teacher's tool box, however, has been questioned and rightly so. A lecture in which the infectious enthusiasm of an expert, who is also a good communicator, excites or motivates the students has much to commend it.

b) The Practical Teacher

It is a powerful context for the transmission of information. In it the teacher can share his/ her reflective experiences with the students. The teacher selects, organizes and delivers information. This is achieved during teaching ward- rounds, ward- based tutorials or more informally with the students.

** The Role Model

a) The on-the-job role model

"What we do is likely to have more impact on learners than what we tell them to do." The importance of the teacher as a role model is well documented, Walton (1985) concluded "Sociological research has demonstrated the extent to which an important component of learning derives from the example given in their own person by teachers, who significantly influence students in many respects, such as in their choice of future career, their professional attitude, and the importance they assign to different subjects.

The teacher should model what should learned. Students learn by observation and imitation of the teachers they respect. Students learn not just from what teachers say but from what they do in their work and the knowledge, skills and attitudes they exhibit. Role modelling is one of the most powerful means of transmitting values, attitudes and patterns of thoughts and behavior to students (Bandura 1986) and in influencing student's career choice.

b) The role model as a teacher

Teachers serve as role models not only when they teach students while perform their duties but also when they fulfill their role as teachers in the classroom, whether it is in the lecture theatre or the small discussion or tutorial group. The teacher has a unique opportunity to share some of the magic of the subject with the students. They can kindle, in the students, a curiosity and quest for a better understanding of the topic by their own personal example that is difficult to reproduce in an instructional text or computer program.

** The Facilitator

a) The learning facilitator

The move to a more student- centered view of learning has required a fundamental shift in the role of the teacher. No longer is the teacher seen predominantly as a dispenser of information or walking tape recorder, but rather as a facilitator or manager of the students learning. The more responsibility and freedom given to the student, the greater the shift required in the teachers' role. Many teachers suggested Jacques (1991), find the task of facilitator "difficult to perform satisfactorily and fall back with some disappointment on their reserve position of authority, expert and prime talker."

The introduction of problem-based learning with a consequent fundamental change in the student-teacher relationship has highlighted the change in the role of the teacher from one of information provider to one of the facilitator. The teacher's role is not to inform the students but to encourage and facilitate them to learn for themselves using the problem as a focus for the learning. It is the role of the teacher to facilitate this process rather than to act simply as an information provider. Teachers needed the ability to communicate with students in an informal way in the small group's sessions, and to encourage student learning by creating an atmosphere in which open exchange of ideas was facilitated. Teachers were able to function most effectively if, in addition to those skills, they also had subject- based knowledge.

The increasing availability and use of learning resource materials also brings with it the need for the teacher as a learning facilitator. It is the responsibility of the teacher to facilitate the student use of the resources by overcoming any deficiencies in the materials and by integrating them with the curriculum. This role of the teacher as a facilitator has been referred to as the supervisor role with the teacher providing the student with opportunities for working, observing the student and giving feedback.

b) The Mentor

Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995) have defined mentoring as "Off-line help by one person to another in making significant transition in knowledge, work or thinking." The mentor is usually not the member of staff who is responsible for the teaching or assessment of the student and is therefore "off-line" in terms of relationship with the student. Mentorship is less about reviewing the students' performance in a subject or an examination and more about a wider view of issues relating to the student.

Lingham and Gupta (1998) defined mentoring as a process by which one person acts towards another as a trusted counsellor or guide. It is not for educational supervision. It is about helping a person to learn within a supportive relationship. It may be a single event but is usually a longer relationship.

** The Assessor

a) The Student Assessor

The assessment of the student's competence is one of the most important tasks facing the teacher. "Good teachers know how they must assess their students' learning suggested Mapstone (1996)" and they want to do it well." Teaching without testing is like cooking without tasting.

Examining does represent a distinct and potentially separate role of the teacher. Thus it is possible for someone to be an expert teacher but not an expert examiner. All institutions now need on their staff some teachers with a special knowledge and understanding of assessment issues. Such individuals act as test developers and provide guidance on the choice of instrument, marking procedures and standard setting. Examining however, must also be regarded as an integral part of the

teacher's role and part of the occupation of teaching in higher education (Piper 1994). Most teachers have something to contribute to the assessment process. This may be in the form of contributing questions to a question bank or acting as examiners. The assessor role of the teacher is often perceived as different from the other roles. While as information provider, role model, facilitator and curriculum planner, the aim of the teacher is to assist the student in a variety of ways to achieve the course goals, as an assessor the teacher has the role of passing judgement on the student.

Murray et al (1996) suggested , " Given the importance of assessment of student performance in university teaching and in student's, lives and careers, instructors are responsible for taking adequate steps to ensure that assessment of students is valid, open, fair, and congruent with course objectives. Students can walk away from bad teaching, Suggests Boud (1990), but they are unable to do so with regard to assessment.

b) The Curriculum Assessor

Evaluation can also be interpreted as an integral part of the professional role teachers, recognizing teachers' own responsibility for monitoring their own performance.

The teacher has a responsibility not only to plan and implement educational programs and to assess the students' learning, but also to assess the course and curriculum delivered. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching of courses and curricula is now recognized as an integral part of the educational process. The quality of the teaching and learning process needs to be assessed through student feedback, peer evaluation and assessment of the product of the educational program. Curriculum and teacher evaluation is a form of accountability which emphasizes the obligation of those employed in the education system to be answerable to the public, to the profession, to those who fund the education and to the students themselves. In this sense evaluation is an instrument of management and control (Nisbet 1990).

Just as important is the self-evaluation by the teacher of his or her teaching with the individual teachers reflecting on and analyzing their own teaching. Feedback from students and other teachers or 'critical friends' may be brought in to provide a further insight and to identify areas in teaching for the teacher's growth and development.

**** The Planner**

a) The Curriculum Planner

Curriculum planning is an important role for the teacher. Different approaches to curriculum planning can be adopted (Harden 1986b) and there are 10 issues that need to be addressed (Harden 1986a). The following should be specified:

*The needs that the curriculum should meet

*The expected learning outcomes

* The content to be included in the curriculum

* The organization of the content

* The educational strategies

* The teaching methods

* The assessment procedure

* Communication about the curriculum to staff and students

* The educational environment

* Procedures for managing the curriculum

Curriculum planning presents a significant challenge for the teacher and both time and expertise is required if the job is to be undertaken properly.

b) The Course Planner

The best curriculum in the world will be ineffective if the courses which comprises have little or no relationship to the curriculum that is in place. Once the principles which underpin the curriculum of the institution have been agreed, detailed planning is then required at the level of the individual course or phase of the curriculum. Traditionally much of the planning was discipline or subject-based. More recently there has been a move to inter-disciplinary or integrated teaching (Harden 2000). Such approaches need to be reflected in course design.

Participation in course planning gives the teacher an opportunity to exert a significant influence on the educational process and to design courses which will achieve the learning outcomes specified by the institution. Much of the creativity and power in teaching lies in the design of the curriculum: the choices of texts and ideas which become the focus of study, the planning of experiences for students and the means by which achievement is assessed. These define the boundaries of the experience for students. Of course the way in which the curriculum is brought

to life is equally important but the power of good teacher-student interactions is multiplied many times by course design.

**** The Resource Developer**

a) The Resource Material Creator

An increased need for learning resource materials implicit in many of the developments in education. With problem-based learning and other student-centered approaches, students are dependent on having appropriate resource material available for use either as individuals or in groups. Even in traditional curricula, students spend as much time with their workbooks as with their teachers.

The new technologies have greatly expanded the formats of learning materials to which the student may have access and make it much easier for the student to take more responsibility for their own education. As developers of resource materials, teachers must keep abreast with changes in technology. An investment in the further development of computer based learning material is needed. The use of computers in education is expanding and some schools make the purchase of computers by students compulsory. Computer-based learning however is often limited by the lack of good material for use by students (Platt and Bairnsfather 1999).

Institute wide use of resource materials to support learning using traditional paper media or new technologies, however, will occur only if at least some teachers possess the array of skills necessary to select, adapt or produce materials for use within the institution. The raising awareness and the training of staff in the role of resource developer is necessary for the appropriate development within an institution of technology supported learning (Longstaffe et al 1996; Ryan et al 1996).

b) The Study Guide Producer

The trend from the teacher as an information provider to the teacher as a manager of students' learning has been discussed. While learning is facilitated by face-to-face contact with students, the amount of time available for this is restricted and can provide only to a limited extent the necessary guidance for students. Study guides suitably prepared in electronic or print form can be seen as the students' personal tutor available 24 hours a day and designed to assist the students with their learning. Study guides tell the student what they should learn- the expected learning outcomes for the course, how they might acquire the competence necessary- the learning opportunities available, and whether they have learned it- the students assessing their own competence (Laidlaw and Harden 1990).

Thus the twelve roles model for the teacher provides an understanding of the different views of the functions fulfilled by the teacher and a framework for the further consideration of these. The explicit identification of the twelve roles and their arrangement in the circle offers a useful model or framework for teachers, for curriculum planners and for administrators in an institution to think and make decisions related to teaching.

The circle represents the overall functions to be filled by a teacher and the segments within the circle represent the key elements that go to make up the overall picture. The different teaching roles appears at first sight to conflict with each other but rather they are complement to each other. We see the teacher as a provider of information but also as a facilitator of learning, encouraging the student to take responsibility for acquiring his or her own information. The teacher is a facilitator, helping the student to learn, but also is an assessor whose role is to pass judgment on the student.

CONCLUSION

So, in this way one can conclude that the teaching profession in which the teacher role was confined to mere teaching practice has changed to the multifaceted profession in which the teacher has to act as a facilitator, guider, resource planner, curriculum builder etc. Thus, one can say that the changing role of teacher has made the teaching profession a challenging, multifaceted and responsible job.

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